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SUBJECT: GEORGIA QUIETLY MARKS ROSE REVOLUTION'S FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY

¶1. (U) On November 23, the fifth anniversary of Georgia's Rose Revolution, the Government held a party and concert to commemorate the occasion. The Ambassador attended both events. Only a small number of foreign dignitaries attended the events, including Polish President Lech Kaczynski, UK Special Representative to the South Caucasus Sir Brian Fall, and the Bulgarian Black Sea Envoy Ambassador Elena Poptodorova. The diplomatic corps and members of the government made up the majority of participants at the events. Prior to these events, President Saakashvili marked the anniversary with a live, televised address to the nation, in which he discussed the Rose Revolution. In the background of the event was the excitement caused by the firing of weapons near the motorcade of Presidents Saakashvili and Kaczynski as they visited a "border" post near South Ossetia.

¶2. (U) In his speech to the nation, Saakashvili noted that "not all of the expectations of the Rose Revolution had been fulfilled" and said the revolution would continue until key tasks were accomplished. Saakashvili said "perhaps more could have been done" in the past five years. Notably, the President said that the August war with Russia would make it "more difficult" to restore Georgia's territorial integrity. He said Georgia "had become the major target of the world's largest aggressor" and is now confronting "a huge empire of evil." However, Saakashvili said that despite this challenge, Russia had failed in its goal to destroy Georgia's statehood and democracy. Saakashvili called for unity, strength, and courage from the country and its citizens, in order to continue the progress made since 2003. He claimed that above all other accomplishments, Georgia has materialized as a true state in the world. Despite this and other achievements, Saakashvili concluded that more remains to be done, and that no effort should be spared to turn Georgia into a "fully free and liberal democracy."

¶3. (SBU) Comment: This party and concert commemorating the Rose Revolution marked a subdued contrast to the massive staging of events that Saakashvili has held in years past. Initially Saakashvili sent out invitations to many world leaders in hopes of holding a large event. While it is difficult to know with certainty what changed, Saakashvili muted the five year anniversary celebrations. It is possible he realized that the time was not right, given the August conflict and the latest spate of negative publicity questioning Saakashvili's judgment in resorting to force, to make a splashy statement of all he has done for Georgia. It is also possible that he was unable to get the level of international representation he had hoped for, in large part due to the high-level visitors from around the globe who have come to Georgia since August, and therefore were not available to return. We also understand that political polling showed that the public was opposed to a big event. Regardless, Saakashvili's statements regarding the events of August were noteworthy as they marked a change in tone from his previous statements, some of which implied that Georgia

had been successful in its conflict with Russia, in spite of the loss of control over the two separatist territories. End comment.

TEFFT